

Africa. I think it's important to express in no uncertain terms our and legitimate concern about actions of South Africa.

We are working in harmony with Western alliance friends. We are in harmony with leaders in Africa and throughout the rest of the world. My decision has been to support sanctions against the sale of arms to South Africa. This will be decided immediately by us.

A prediction is the United Nations adopt such a resolution, and it will be overwhelmingly supported by nations of the world. This will be decided with a direction from me that be carried out. It would include prohibition against the sale of spare parts to weapons and we will also, of course, assess other actions that might be taken in the future.

We don't know yet what the negotiations might be between us and the South Africans that I describe to you, but this is an appropriate action in my opinion, and we still hope that South Africa will not sever themselves from the rest of the world community, that they will cooperate with us in bringing peace to the world. That they will move in a rapid evolutionary way toward restoring the rights for the first time those who have been denied that we hold so dear.

4. Natural Gas Pricing

Q. Mr. President. There is talk on Capitol Hill that the Administration would accept a bill that sets the pricing of natural gas at \$1.85 per mcf and I said that you would only sign a bill that was fair to the consumers, if the Congress were to pass a bill that set the price at \$1.65, would you sign it?

A. I don't want to get into the role of saying I will or will not sign a bill. It has this or that in it. As you know, the negotiations on the House and Senate side both are very sensitive at this point and we had prospects several months ago in June and July of having a complete failure in the House.

They debated and worked and very courageously came out with an acceptable package fairly close to what we proposed. I still stand behind the proposals that we made to Congress in April. I believe that's the best approach. The price for natural gas that we put forward was \$1.75. It involves a slow but predictable increase in the price of natural gas that would be comparable with world prices and it had been accurate, I think an adequate description of the definition of new gas.

We also proposed to include both intrastate and interstate gas in this new program. That's still my position and that's what I'm going to fight for and work hard for in the conference committee, and then when the conference committee comes back to the House and Senate.

I have not had any secret or private agreements with anyone to modify our own original proposal. We stuck with

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the general terms of a settlement. The details, the exact procedures by which we might verify and so forth, would take a long and tedious negotiation.

As you know, the SALT I agreement, the so-called interim agreement, provides for heavy disparity between us and the Soviets, with the Soviets having a right to have about one-third more launchers than we have, and about one-third more submarines than we have, and about one-third more submarine missiles than we have.

The Vladivostok Agreement which, as you know, has never been ratified, set a 2,400 limit on launchers, 1,320 limit on American missiles. We hope to reduce those levels. And there's a general agreement now that those levels will be reduced.

Also, for the first time, we have discussed in very strong terms and are close to an agreement on how many land-based ICBM MIRV missiles will be permitted. This is a new development.

But we've not yet reached final agreement between ourselves and the Soviet Union.

But I think, as I said in both Iowa and in Los Angeles, within a few weeks we'll have a demonstration of real progress. The detail signing of a treaty will take longer than that.

6. Indictment of Helms

Q. Mr. President, Attorney General Griffin Bell said recently that he has reached some decision now in his own mind as to whether or not it is proper and practical to seek an indictment against former C. I. A. Director Richard Helms. He also discussed some of the ways that he thought might be used to keep sensitive materials of national security value from being revealed in any trial that might ensue.

Have you reached any conclusion in your own mind on this matter, and is the issue of revealing national security material sufficiently resolved now so that the judgment can be made on the merits of a possible indictment itself?

A. I don't know. The Attorney General has not informed me about what his decision is. In fact, I had not known he had made a decision until I saw it in the press. I would presume, though, that before that decision is put into final form that he would discuss it with me. He has not yet done so.

7. Criticism of President

Q. Mr. President, Mr. Rhodes, the Republican leader of the House, says that your Administration is inept. And, as you know, a lot of people have been suggesting that you have not been able to cope with all of these problems and with all of these initiatives. Assuming you don't think there's a word of truth in any of that, will you tell us why you think the perception is abroad to

—the universities, the economists, the business leaders, the labor leaders.

And I don't see anything wrong with this or anything that I would have done differently. The fact that the easy solutions have not come forward immediately don't concern me because they are not the questions that can be resolved easily.

But I think that in the long run, certainly in retrospect after this year goes

on, the energy package, I predict rating would drop 15 points.

There is a general country of optimism as revealed by Pat C. others. The economy's good attributes in it recognized vividly. It is coming down fairly, an underlying inflation about 6 percent. The

Carter Promises a Slower

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that he had been listening to the critics. He also seemed less ebullient and more seriously optimistic than he had been earlier in the year.

He admitted he had a big appetite for the "difficult and controversial" adding, "but I could not bring myself as President, responsible for our people's security and for the welfare of our citizens, for the redressing of some longstanding problems, to delay them simply to avoid controversy."

But he indicated, far more clearly than he had in the past, some realistic doubts about the art of the possible.

"It might take us three or four more years to reach a final conclusion on welfare reform, or tax reform," he said, a prediction he had not made before. It was, he said, better to get such difficult "problems on the table" and let the power centers and the people chew on them.

But, in a move that showed he was by no means innocent of political reality and of the need for careful timing, he said that his much heralded "tax reform" bill would be held back until a nearly exhausted Congress dealt with his energy policy proposals and with new financing for the depleted Social Security System. Mr. Carter was deliberately vague about whether the tax reform package would come at the end of this Congressional session or early next year—but it will definitely come.

Then, he clearly indicated, the country will be given a sort of breathing spell.

"I was thinking the other day," he said softly, "about what new major innovative proposals might be forthcoming next year and the year after. I can't think of any. I think we have addressed all of the major problems already." He added, "I think most of the major debates now have already been initiated."

This was not quite as simple as the President made it sound. One of his top White House assistants said later that the President would probably try to introduce into Congress sometime in the next two years national health insurance legislation and a comprehensive "urban policy," since they are commitments already made by the President.

Nonetheless, his words may be a relief to critics like Arthur F. Burns, the chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, who only yesterday criticized Mr. Carter's eco-

nomic policies and suspected "the ability of the President to simulate new policy planning framework stretched pretty thin."

The President did not say any of the supposed. Burns had hinted of again, Mr. Carter seemed more than combative.

He said he "shared" I that "we have created a business community of all"—although he said helped because urgent remedy.

Three different times news conference Mr. Carter reform program would at promoting capital encouraging capital investment that Mr. Burns had said.

Mr. Carter said whether to reappoint term as chairman of expires in January. He very able and outgoing man." [Question 2]

And Mr. Carter

Christmas Plans

WASHINGTON, President Carter, said Rosalynn, had made decision" to return the Christmas home to day that his justified to its new

"I always spend he said after a news conference.

He said that Mrs the decision to return the holiday.

"The town has accommodated of tourists and financially from to put ... and structure intact."

He was asked would attend in one or a new summer, and as he did the